

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 1903.

HERE HAPPY THROGS REVELED IN THE WINTERY SPORT



HAVING SKATES FASTENED ON.

Hundreds of Wash-
ingtonians Aailed
Themselves of the
Excellent Skating
During the Past Week.

The "Basin"
Thronged With
Pleasure Seekers
Day and Night,
All Bent on Enjoying
the Exhilarating
Sport as Long as
Possible.

THE cold snap of the past week certainly verified the old adage that "it is an ill wind that blows no man good."

For, although the low level of the mercury caused more than a little real suffering among the city's poor, the hearts of the youngsters, and thousands of older folks as well, were filled with joy by the excellent skating on the numerous bodies of water adjacent to Washington. Everyone who possessed a pair of skates, from the young man or woman from the bon-ton section of the town, who rode to the ice in a carriage or automobile, down to the thinly clad urchin who tagged along, his rusty, dilapidated skates jingling from a strap across his shoulder, joined in the endless procession toward the mecca of their desires.

Flocked to the Basin.

While there were a number of places where the skating was excellent, it was the "basin," or public bathing beach, that attracted the greatest crowds. Out at Chevy Chase Lake the ice was in splendid condition, and everything gave way to the sport. Portions of Rock Creek were also thickly frozen over, and were the cause of many a youngster "playing hookey" from school. The fish ponds, too, had their share of the skaters.

But it was reserved for the "basin" to be the center of attraction for the young and old of both sexes. Here the crowds were greatest and the most cosmopolitan; here was the most room for the "hockey matches" of the boys from the city's colleges; here the spirit of this amusement which Washingtonians so seldom enjoy was at its height, and here the sport was best.

Met On an Equal Footing.

Whatever else could be said of it, the ice was a great leveler of rank and station. On its smooth surface the little chap in ragged clothes, and whose lack of gloves made the use of his pockets a prime necessity, secured every bit as much enjoyment out of the sport as the jauntily attired young gentleman whose father reckoned his worldly possessions.



"THE MAN WITH THE SAIL" ONE OF THE SPORTS OF THE ICE.

in the millions. Fifty-cent skates answer the purpose just as well as \$5 or \$8 ones—when the skater knows how to handle them. No portions of the big expanse were reserved for the especial use of anyone; the whole place was free to all, and the skaters covered every part of it, even out to the narrow neck that connects the basin with the river, where the ice was known to be thin and dangerous. The hockey teams occupied one corner of the ice, but they provided amusement for the hundreds of other skaters.

Would Not Be Vexed.

The determination to enjoy the sport to the limit while it lasted was plainly written on every face. Happen what might, the persons who made up that ever restless, moving throng displayed no signs of displeasure or chagrin. When a skater's feet flew from under him, and he collided with the hard surface of the ice with a sudden compact calculated to well-nigh jar his head from his shoulders, he merely picked himself up—or had someone else perform the service for him—and went on skating. He couldn't afford to let a little thing like that stop him. Or if one of the many persons who were taking advantage of the brisk breeze by sailing across the ice at a really marvelous speed with the aid of a big sail chanced to run him down and send him careening off on the back of his head, much to the detriment of clothing—well, he only sat up when he finally came to a standstill, tenderly felt the lovely bumps on his aching cranium, and grinned forgivingly at the rapidly disappearing cause of his misery.

Philosophical View

But he did even more. He could fly while a flying, conquering force of humanity from one of the grounds dashed madly into—or what was left of him, if a score of sharp sate

points lashed with terrific force against his ribs, and a ton, more or less, of brawn and stout shoe leather piled up in a confused heap upon tender spots of his anatomy? It was all a part of the fun. Why not let the boys enjoy themselves? If they found any pleasure in temporarily laying him out, he was quite sure he didn't mind. It was his place to keep out of the way.

He Didn't Mind.

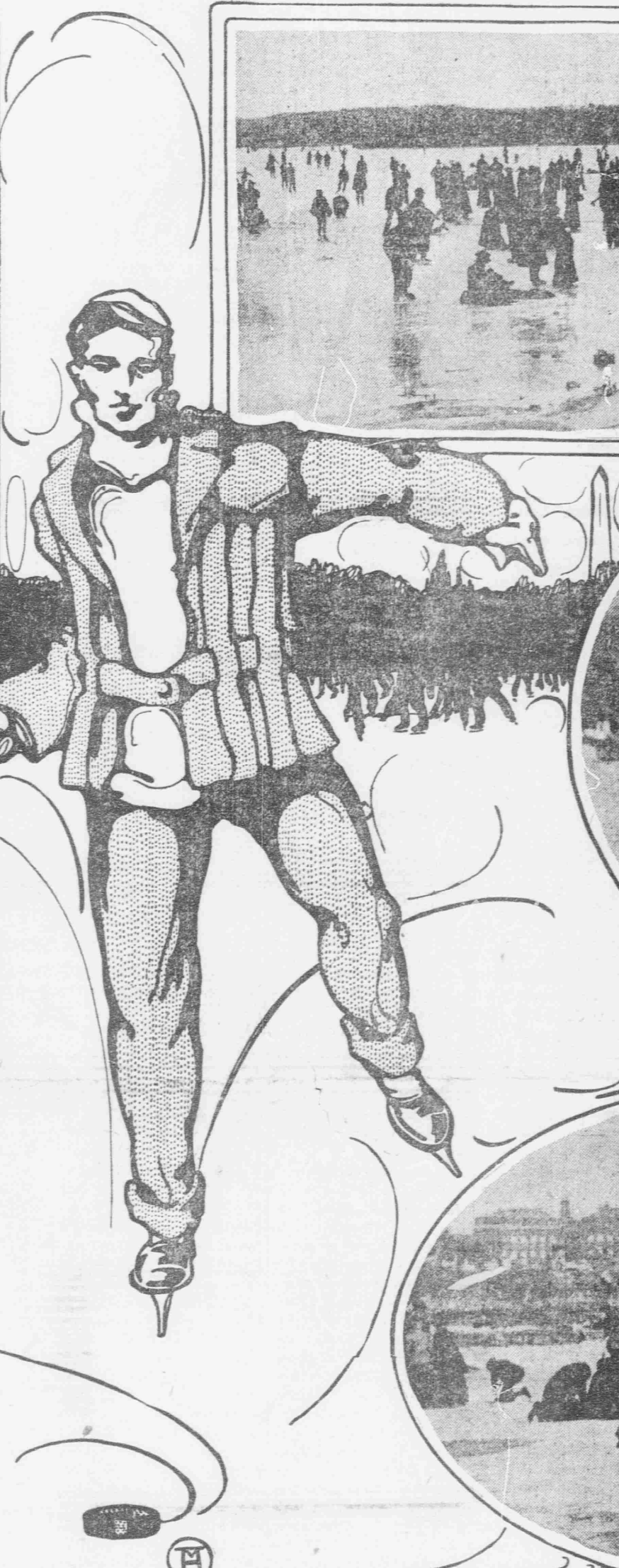
Nor was this all. If he was so unfortunate as to break through the ice—provided he was hauled out before sustaining any more serious damages than a fearfully cold bath—what was the sense in his missing the fun by going home to procure dry clothing? There were several little fires along the shore, where the skaters warmed their hands. And he ended the matter by simply going up and hugging the blaze until he was rid of the chill and was more or less dry in patches. Then he went on skating, the exertion dried the rest of his clothing. It was the easiest way out of the difficulty.

d varied were the types in

evidence. They were not all skaters. Far from it. Many went just to look on. And others went strictly for business. For some lines of business were highly remunerative out on the ice. Enterprising persons found trade brisk ever here.

All for a Dime.

Prominent among these merchants of the ice was the scrupulously polite colored citizen with a chair or bench fastened to a sled. As you stepped off the gang plank he would push his movable "bureau of rest" quickly forward, inviting you in cheerful tones to be seated and have your skates fastened on "so dey'd never come off," including a quick sharpening—all for "de small sum of ten cents, one dime." The sharpening was generally limited to the hasty application of a woefully rusty file, manipulated with wonderfully quick twists.



A CROWD
OF SKATERS.



THEY PROMISED TO TEACH HER TO SKATE



WAITING TO START OUT.

cality every two or three minutes, as the oil stove was disposed to melt the ice beneath it, at a brisk rate.

The "Sailing" Sport.

Ever an object of more than usual interest was the "man with the sail." A number of men and boys had fashioned neat triangular-shaped sails, generally about ten by twelve feet. Stout but light bamboo poles formed the framework over which unbleached cotton or thin canvas was stretched. Given a good, stiff breeze and a thorough knowledge of the management of the sail, a person could skim over the ice at a really incredible speed. In a very high wind an expert at this sport can sail at a rate not a great deal under a mile a minute. At times his pace is so swift that he can scarcely breathe.

But woe betide the sailman who strikes a rough spot or break in the ice while moving at a high rate of speed and falls. Nothing can check his momentum. If he survives the tumble with no more serious injuries than a few bruises he is truly fortunate. However, ice sailing is excellent sport when the ice is smooth, and the man who had sails for hire did a flourishing business.

The Overshadowing Tragedy.

With the exception of the terrible tragedy of Thursday evening, in which one young woman and two men lost their lives, there was nothing to mar the thorough enjoyment of the brief period of skating. Now that it is over, the eyes of the youngsters are anxiously regarding the forecasts of the weather clerk for predictions of another freeze-up.



THEY HAVE JUST COME ONTO THE ICE, AND ARE UNDECIDED WHETHER TO TAKE A TURN AROUND

tent a good distance out from the shore, procured a small oil stove for providing hot coffee and "dog" sandwiches. Fresh pies, cakes, and all have seen manner of pastry were dispensed to the hungry multitudes over the counter. Day and night the "lunch room" had as many patrons as it could well supply. The proprietor of the establishment was obliged to have his hands full to keep his